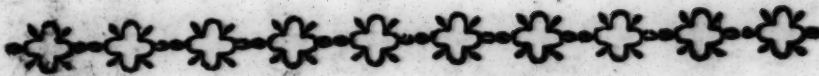


(9.)

June 14. 1791.  
B. 1.

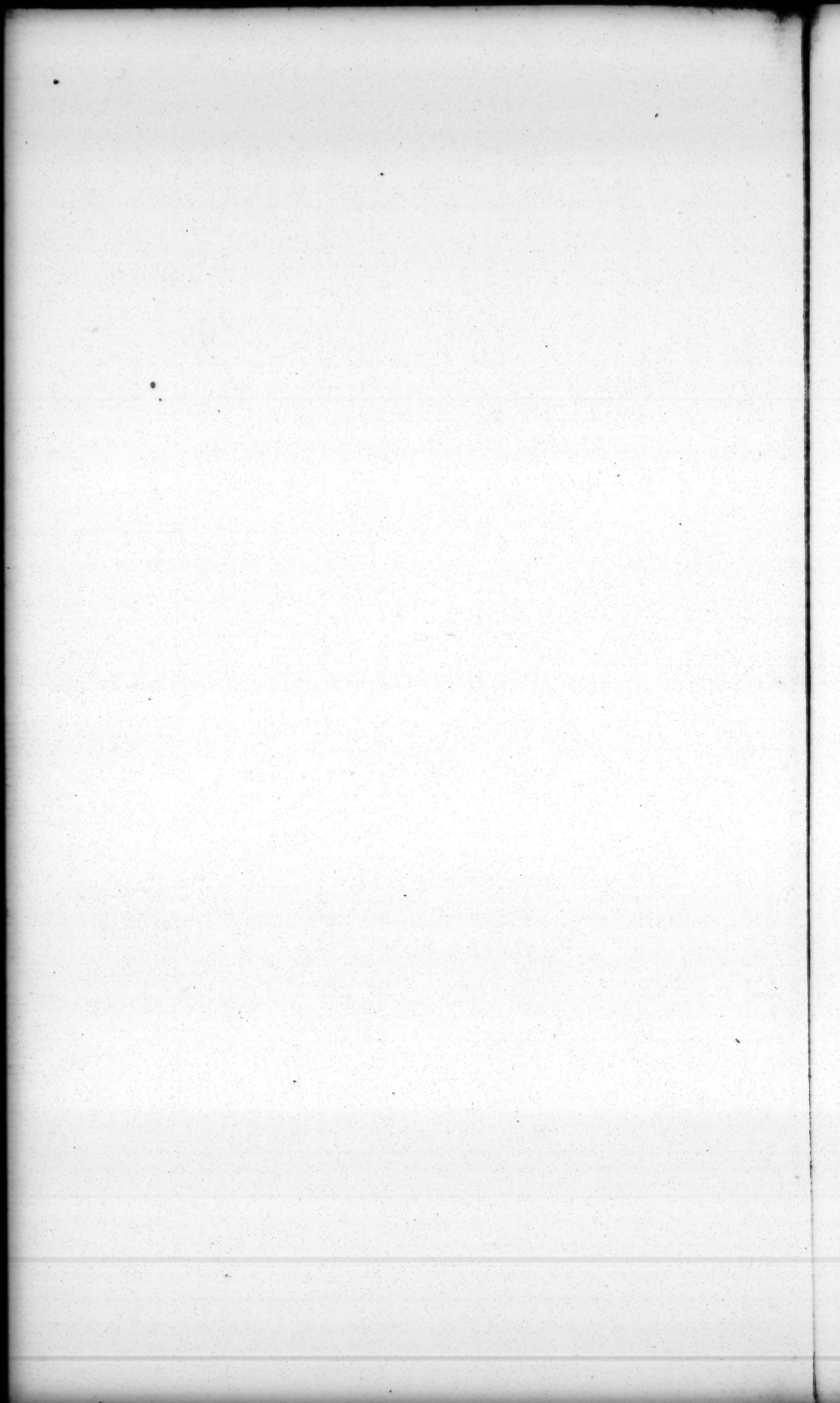


A N

A D D R E S S . &c.









A N  
A D D R E S S  
T O T H E  
INHABITANTS OF BIRMINGHAM,  
UPON  
THE NECESSITY OF ATTENDING TO THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIND—PREVIOUS  
TO THEIR FORMING A JUST OR COM-  
PLETE THEORY OF EDUCATION—UPON  
THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION, AND  
ITS RELATIVE VALUE:

WITH A  
*Particular Address to Tutors and Parents.*

*Discite ô miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum,  
Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur :  
Ordo quis datus; — patriæ charisque propinquis  
Quantum elargiri debeat : quem te Deus esse  
Jussit et humanâ quâ parte locatus es in re.*

PERSII, SAT. 3.

The proper Study of Mankind is Man.

POPE.

---

B Y A P A T R I O T.

---

B I R M I N G H A M:  
PRINTED BY AND FOR M. SWINNEY;  
A N D  
G. G. J. & J. ROBINSON, LONDON.









D E D I C A T I O N  
T O  
S O C I E T Y.

**I**T is from *you*, I have received the breath of life. From *you*, the sources of my knowledge—the polish of civilization—and the motives of my actions. It is to *you*, therefore, I look with the most fervent gratitude for every past improvement—to *you*, therefore, I consecrate this feeble but virtuous effort.

If my heart be exhilarated by hopes, or depressed by fears; they originate in the prospect of your future glory or future disgrace. *You* are deeply interested in the present  
object



object of my pen. I cannot therefore act more nobly than in proposing *that*, upon which depends your future race of *Patriots—Heroes and Philosophers*. If you can extend the comprehension of your minds to *ever-growing improvement*, you will consider a *just theory of Education as the proper basis of manly reason—solid attainments—progressive science—and unassuming but vigorous virtue*.

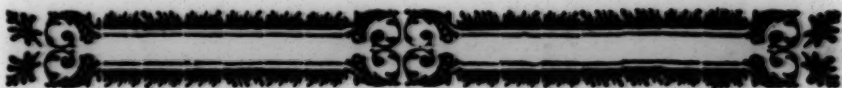
Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque;  
 Æque neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.

HOR. EPIST.

Let not the singularity of this dedication astonish you—the address is to the inhabitants of *Birmingham*, but only as they are a part of one *widely-extended whole*.

To





TO THE  
R E A D E R.

---

*THE writer of this address, a man  
and your brother, entreats you  
to consider that whether his sentiments  
bring with them the fascinating charms  
of novelty, or are to be found in the  
pages of hoary antiquity: whether  
they are sanctioned by the patronage of  
the many, or have received only the cre-  
dit of the few; entirely independent of  
these considerations, they may be false  
—they may be true. You will find in  
it his definitions, maxims, and reason-  
ings. If what he advances as true, be  
not*



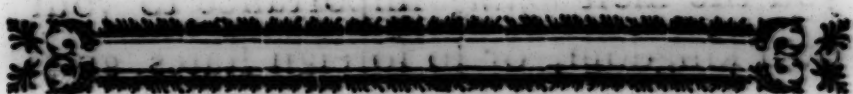
*not instantly received as such, he wishes you to remember that confirmed prejudices were never known to die in a day. If you doubt — examine. If you examine, reason, philosophy, and truth will have time to operate—but if the severity of self-government ; a cautious attention to the evidence adduced ; and the candour of delicate humanity will not reconcile you to his ideas, do not forget that the temporary defense of error, may consist with the constant pursuit of truth ; in all be assured, that a tame resignation of the understanding is one of the most powerful impediments to knowledge.*

*Ac ne forte roges, quo me duce, quo lare tuter  
Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.*

**HOR.**

**A N**





A N

A D D R E S S , &c.

---

WAS not my confidence in your liberality equal to the ardour of my wishes for your welfare, I should deem this address as presumptuous in its *nature*, as it would be useless in its *tendency*. But indeed, were my opinion of your generosity arrived to a degree even enthusiastic, I should feel it *beneath* me, to compliment your virtues by insulting your understandings. And should I do *less*, were I thus *publickly* to solicit your attention to an object of *no moment* to the purity of your morals; the dignity of your manners; or the permanency of your happiness? but that which must give

B

you



you the most *lasting* importance to your own kingdom, or to foreign states, gives an energy to my pen ; for the *manner* in which you now *educate* your off-spring, will either entail disgrace or confer respect.

Whether I mark your numbers, your wealth, or your commercial influence, I discern a motive which will justify my freedom. Your numbers extend the influence of your *example* ; your wealth gives power to your *inclinations* ; and your commerce, in proportion to its extent, widens the sphere of your *authority*. Can you say, you feel no ambition to see the proper effect of these either separately, or in union ? No. You must then introduce a *manly*—a *rational*—an *effectual* course of education. Again,

Could I propose a *certain* remedy for such disorders as are *too* generally produced by some of your operations, or direct



rect you to such chemical processes as would *facilitate* your several objects in trade, I am confident but *few* of you would deny me your attention. But can you do this, when, as *men of reason*, you declare yourselves ready to adopt *every* plan that will rectify the errors of this principle? as *patriots* determined to *free* your country from that mental vassalage—that gloomy superstition—that wild enthusiasm—those mad extravagancies—those licentious amours—those enfeebling maxims—which you *know* originates in a *very defective education*, either the scheme or execution of it—or because truly such characters have had *no* education at all—how long must this be seen and *no* exertions made? Because you are *men*, you must be charmed with every accession of knowledge to the individual; as *members of society*, with its rapid progressions towards the sole object of its existence—and is it possible that you should be *unmoved* by that which will *best* accelerate the attainment



ment of these? I will not retail the encomiums of the ancients, or the panegyrics of the moderns upon this topic; neither do I mean to contrast in *you*, how *little* has been *done*, with how *much* has been *said*.

In the instant of writing this, I have before me fourteen authors upon education; each either tacitly acknowledges or directly asserts its wonderful importance—each prescribes a number of *rules* to secure its end:—I ask is it a *fact*, that this end is *usually* attained in any school in England? Do the boys educated in our different seminaries, possess half the knowledge or half the virtue which authors assure us is attainable? I am confident not:—to give you conviction equal to my own, use the same process—compare the assertions of authors, with the understanding, or tempers of boys when they have *left* school. Now undoubtedly, when a most important object has been exhibited



exhibited to Britain with no despicable ardour, from the days of our spirited Milton to *this* era of improvement; it is *decent*—it is *just* to assign the *true reason* of our failure—have writers proposed chimerical schemes? are their outlines well drawn, but *imperfectly* filled up? is it because the authors were *not all* preceptors? is it because our present tutors have never *availed* themselves of what has been written already? or that their experience has never been formed into laws of *conduct*? In the name of manly enquiry and activity, let us assign some *probable cause* for the present state of our youths in different parts of this nation. I shall not deem it a satisfactory answer should any person bring me a single case from Greece, or from Rome—from the industry of a Socrates, or the penetration of a Milton—where solid improvements had been made. The superior attainments of a *few* individuals are easily accounted for. Socrates was a *pattern* of the virtues he inculcated  
upon



upon his pupils—his knowledge of the mind not contemptible—Milton was an instance of *uncommon* mental energy—he saw the absurdity of many Monkish institutions, and he rose above them. His letter to Hartlib is deemed a masterpiece of reasoning; and his pupils were living proofs of what a *small* portion of intellectual knowledge could effect, by a *judicious application* of it.

But even admitting that each writer upon education had been a preceptor; I am bold to question whether *they* could have given life, body and form to their precepts? for this reason—the schemers themselves do not appear, from their writings, to have discerned the *philosophical* principles, upon which their maxims are or *ought* to be founded. Some plans do not seem to have been even practicable. I am now thinking upon some passages in Rousseau's *Emilius*; but by this means the number of *possible* ones is lessened; of course



course we have the less time to lose, and the greater reason for applying immediately to business.

Others that are so, i. e. that *merely dictate* to a preceptor what sort, or how many virtues he should form—what arts or sciences he should teach, are lamentably *defective*; who does not know that a vine *requires* training before it can produce fruit? But does the knowledge of what *ought to be done* imply the *method* of doing it? if so, every man would be a gardener! these *systems* to which I allude, (if they deserve the name) leave the mind of a tutor *totally* ignorant of the *manner* in which the end of education is to be attained: and they no more merit the name of treatises on education, than upon moral philosophy! It is really astonishing that writers should not have availed themselves more of this very palpable *distinction*. I am acquainted with persons, who, from an amiable solicitude to give  
useful



useful inclinations to their children, have purchased and carefully read upon this subject; and yet, this moment, are as far from being able *judiciously* to effect their end, as to cure a fever or stop a consumption.

I must apprise you that this short address is not intended to unfold *every law of the human mind*, or to contain every step by which you may ascend with *certainty* to the mighty objects of general education. I only mean to *account* to you, and to society, for the *want* of that success which you, as respectable parents, and generous Englishmen, have aimed at.

In the pursuit of truth, I have, for the time, formed some conclusions.—As no labour can strictly be in vain, I have resolved to make a few thoughts the property of the public, and I do assure them, I can feel no *higher* gratification than to know, that even in the *least* degree



gree, it has effected an *improvement* in an *art* of the *first*—the *last* importance—not merely to the political virtue of any *separate state*, but to the unlimited good of every human being.\*

The virtuous Dr. Price has observed, in a late publication, “ I often think there may remain a *secret* in education to be discovered, which will contribute *more than any thing* to the amendment of mankind; and he who should advance *one step* towards making this discovery, would deserve better of the world, than all the learned scholars and professors who have *hitherto* existed.” Dr. Price, undoubtedly, merits the character of a metaphysician—but *as such* he must not be sup-

---

\* To have *right thoughts of things*, and to *communicate those thoughts* to others, is the *whole part* we have to act on this stage of the world, and these two things are very closely united.

*Petwin's Letters concerning the mind.*

C

posed



posed ignorant of the *nature* of the human mind. It is evident from his works that he has more than *read* that surprising production, (I refer to the time of its publication,) Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. He could not have omitted the 33 cap. book 2. "On the association of ideas." As the belief of a proposition, and the application of it to *all its possible uses* are totally different; it is very probable, that when the aforementioned remark was made, the Doctor did not advert to the doctrine of association, or the *manner* in which our ideas are linked together, as supplying him with a *true key* to his secret; or a *cause* when attended to, which will contribute *more than any thing* to the amendment of mankind. 'Tis even possible that Dr. Price may not see *how* this doctrine, well explained and wisely applied, is capable of gratifying his wishes. \*I will not assert that

---

\* There is a dialogue in Fordyce's 1 vol. on Education, dialogue 10, that merits the attention of tutors.



that this is the *only* law of the mind, but perhaps at some future period, I may shew him, how far a *tutor's* acquaintance with the manner in which this law operates, will contribute to that amendment, which I am sure so pious a heart is longing for. However at present I do not chuse to dignify this with the title of the *secret* of education.

Turnbull, in his observations upon liberal education, says, “ that Eutyphron, a noted preceptor——was wont to say,” “ that he who knew how to reconcile this seeming contradiction, had in his opinion got the *true arcanum* of education,” viz. “ to form self-command or self-denial and mastership of the passions, without weakening the vigour and activity of the mind; or destroying that love of power, dominion, and authority, without which there can be no greatness of mind; nay, no incentive to industry and improvement.” What is afterwards



asserted upon this subject may be reduced to this; this seeming contradiction may *really* be reconciled: this must be done upon the doctrine of *habits*: and these habits are to be formed as *soon as possible*.

Now I should enquire *how* this noted preceptor formed these habits? to say only, it was by a repetition of acts, will not *bottom* (excuse this word) the question.

Nothing is more evident than that a habit, whether it respects a mode of thinking—speaking or acting, must be the *result of repeated acts*—there was a period when the 'first act had not taken place—how did he prevail with his pupil to practise the *first* act of self-denial? how to renew that act? it was not surely a mere “you shall”—“you shall not” that gave him “the mastery of his passions.” I am not a stranger to those parents and tutors who have both nodded  
and



and frowned; blustered and caressed; and yet the youth has continued as void of impression, as a piece of marble from the striking of a feather. Take the following example: I wish to form in a young gentleman the habit of reading:—now undoubtedly this is begun if I can prevail upon him to *read*. I open before him a collection of English proverbs—these are perused with listlessness and disgust. I *renew* the act by the eight volumes of the Spectator. My pupil's attention is fatigued—his aversion to books heightened—and, by a thousand nameless circumstances, he is reproaching me with *ignorance of the conduct of the mind*. I could reverse these steps; I could shew tutors, that would they *avail* themselves of the aids of *philosophy* and *experience*, it would be possible to train youths to the love of reading and thought, *as easily* as to a particular motion of the leg or the arm. The limits

I have



I have set to this address will not allow it. Seriously weigh then, ye preceptors, this observation: “ every thing in nature is *particular*—a child at first thinks of nothing which is not so—his recollection is never of *general* principles—his mental pleasures are confined to single facts—there is a proper age, when nature teaches him to abstract, or generalize his ideas—*accord with nature*, and you will succeed.

This case evidently proves, that when writers upon education advise tutors to form good habits, it is equal to saying what is equivalent to *nothing*. What then, I ask, are those *general laws*, by a due attention to which, parents and preceptors will gain such an ascendancy over a youth, as will facilitate the acts and confirm the habits?

Besides, were this the *arcanum* of education, in this particular case, no logic will justify a *general* conclusion from an individual



individual example. What is that arcanum which will assist a tutor to effect, what every comprehensive mind means by education? that only merits the title of the “secret” which will answer whatever question offers in the practical part of it.

I will not venture to assure Dr. Price, that I am at present in possession of his desideratum; or that I shall even advance one step towards it—I boast of nothing but an effort. What follows may demand a severer attention than the generality of readers are accustomed to give. I wish I could prevent it; but my apology is the *nature* of the observations. I will render it as familiar as illustration from *particular opposite facts* will allow. In examining the treatises of Rousseau, Locke, Turnbull, Fordyce, Nelson, Homes, Williams, &c. &c. I have long thought that one *common defect* has pervaded the whole of their writings upon  
this



this subject. Each contains a variety of maxims and of precepts: But not *one* of these writers has shewn the connection of these maxims and precepts, with the *construction of the human mind*—not one of these has deduced a chain of principles—of directions, from *strict philosophical reasoning on the formation of our intellectual, and moral powers—on the gradual manner in which our various capacities unfold themselves*. For proof of this, I refer every man to their writings. But until this be done, every author upon this subject must think to a great degree of *random*; retailing observations whose foundations he does not see, or presenting detached cases instead of a connected series. But if education-maxims are true, they *ultimately* rest upon the *nature* of our minds, or the real constitution of man, if not they rest *no where*. Where then they end, a masterly treatise on education must begin. It is proper that I should define this term—“by Education,” I mean,



mean “ the *art* of directing the powers and feelings of children, in the most *expeditious* and *effectual* manner, to gain and secure the object of their existence;” now every art, *as such*, is founded on certain principles, which constitute the *science* of it. You may judge of the truth of this observation, by applying it to agriculture, and to commerce—to arithmetic, and to morality.

Mr. John Trembley, in the year 1785, published, I think in Holland, a prize-dissertation upon the utility of Psychology,\* in which he says, with the most rigid propriety, “ That to deny its beneficial effects on education, would be *as absurd*, as to assert that we can *improve a complex piece of mechanism, without being well acquainted with its construction and movements.*” I will not conceal the order of my reflections upon this subject. Three questions instantly offer themselves.

---

\* A discourse upon the mind, its powers, &c. &c.



1. Is the knowledge of the philosophy of the mind *absolutely necessary* to a just and complete system of education?

2. Is such knowledge capable of being applied to any *valuable* and *extensive uses*?

3. Admitting that I am convinced of its necessity and utility, what is the most *ready and effectual* method of gaining it?

1. The necessity of such a species of knowledge may be evinced either *independent* of other arts; or by analogy. For what do you mean by the *improvement* of your offspring, but enlarging their understandings—giving accuracy to their judgments—a curb to their imaginations—vigour to their memories—benevolence to their feelings—and decency [to their manners? Suppose, for a moment, that you do not perceive any *difference* between the understanding, and



and the fancy—the fancy and the memory, &c. Suppose that neither you, nor preceptors, had any acquaintance with the powers and passions of your children. In this case, it would be *next to impossible*, that you, or they, should improve them in the *least degree*: now, undoubtedly, a *few* degrees of this sort of *knowledge*, must, in the language of Bacon, give you a *few* degrees of *power*; these degrees doubled will increase your influence—and so on in *proportion* to your real acquaintance with the *nature of mind*. Without carrying your ideas into your mode of conduct, as it respects *other* arts, can any truth be more evident, than that your ability in education must *keep pace* with your knowledge? that to know *what* it is you wish to better, must precede your knowing *how* to do it?

But my argument from *analogy* will probably affect you more forcibly. To argue from analogy, is to reason from



the likenefs of one thing to *another*, fo far as the refemblance is kept up. Gardening—agriculture—medicine—furgery—architecture, &c. all agree with education in their being *arts*; and, as every art, *as fuch*, depends upon fome *ſcientific* principles, what may be affirmed of arts in *general*, may be affirmed of any *individual*, as education. Now you know that a gardener advances the growth of a plant, in *proportion* to his knowledge of its make—the laws of vegetation—influences of feaſon and of air—its diſtinguiſhing qualities, &c.

A phyſician preſcribes with ſucceſs, *according* to his acquaintance with the internal ſtructure of the human body—the *history* and theory of diſeaſes—their cauſes—ſymptoms and cures—circumſtances that take place before—follow, &c.

A mechanic *facilitates* his object by marking the connection—the dependence  
ance



ance of the different parts of his complex machinery. But why should *anatomical* knowledge be so necessary to the physician, but because his acquaintance with any particular part will give him some knowledge of the *influence* of medicine upon that part? Now the scheme which I am proposing is nothing more than the *anatomy of the mind*, as absolutely *necessary*, before either parents or tutors can prescribe with any effect.—Put that curious piece of mechanism a watch into the hands of an untaught rustic; ask him to accelerate or retard the motion of its wheels?—I leave your minds to fill up this sentence. Analogical reasoning from such sources are endless. I only wish you to carry it so far, as to prove how *necessary a knowledge of intellectual philosophy* is to your success in the education of your children.

Q. 2. Is such knowledge capable of being applied to any *valuable* and *extensive uses*?

I wish



I wish you to recollect that the *necessity* of any particular branch of knowledge bears a *relative proportion* to the *uses* to which it is applicable. It is for this reason, you never assert any thing to be necessary which has *no* uses at all. The *necessity*, therefore, of your forming just views of what the mind *really* is, will rise according as I demonstrate their utility; so that, should the *happiness* of your offspring depend upon the *manner* of their education, and the manner of their education, depend upon your acquaintance with the *powers* of their minds, the necessity of such knowledge will become *absolute*. Harangues on the *influence* of education, upon personal, domestic, and public happiness, (I adore God for the good sense of the times!) are almost become fashionable; but does not the *certainty* and *extent* of its influence, unanswerably prove the *utility* of intellectual philosophy? for what is it which can give a particular mode of training its *effect*,  
but



but that *law* of the mind, by which impressions *reiterated* become *lasting*? And how is it possible that such laws should ever be discovered without a cautious attention to the nature of our minds? \*A certain author who published, several years ago, “some Miscellaneous Observations relating to education,” exactly expresses my ideas upon this subject.

Sect. 12, Page 105. “I shall conclude with observing, that the influence of general *states of mind*, *turns of thought*, and *fixed habits*, which are the consequence of them, is so great, that too much attention

---

\* The writer referred to is Dr. Priestley, who, from his knowledge of the *masterly* theory of Hartley, and his *close* attention to the minds of youth, who were under his direction at different periods of his life, has been able to present mankind with *more consistent* sentiments upon this subject, than *most*, if not *all* of his predecessors. It is with real satisfaction that I can recommend the attention of Birmingham to a second edition of these “Miscellaneous Observations,” printed by Mr. Swinney.



tion cannot be given to education and the conduct of early life. Supposing the present laws of our minds to continue, (and there is no more reason to expect a change in them than in any other of the laws of nature,) our happiness to endless ages must depend upon it."

Perhaps you, who are now reading this address, are a *parent*. Can you believe that your speech—your conduct—your looks—your manners—produce *no* effect upon your surrounding offspring? this is impossible — this would be absurd — the effect is as *inevitable*, as that which you produce by a blow upon any part of their tender bodies. And is it to be supposed, that your knowing the *manner*, in which all *dispositions*—all *tendencies* to dispositions —all *characters* are formed—would be of no avail to their *education* in manly, rational, and benevolent principles? If you knew the *sort* of ideas, that your children, as *such*, were *necessarily* accustomed



tomed to, you would be the *more capable* of accommodating your conversation to their size of intellect—if you had collected their *real state* of mind, at any particular age, and saw *how* motives produce their effects, you would be *capable of altering* the balance according to your wishes: if you could perceive how their ideas were *first linked or clustered* together, you would be *better able to break* the chain or *disunite* the cluster: could you perceive how they would *probably* be affected by any *external situation*, you would *weigh* the *nature* and *tendency* of such influences, and allow or forbid accordingly.

When I profess to demonstrate to you the utility of such knowledge, I mean something totally different from inventions of mere entertainment. And even in the scale of useful discoveries, I do not hesitate to place a just theory of education in the *highest* degree of it. It is a star of the first magnitude.

E

Will



Will you deny that your own happiness as men, results more from *character* than from external circumstances? But what is character, whether the knave, or the hypocrite; the prodigal, or the miser; the voluptuary, or the temperate; the skulking, or the open—but the result of *slow growth*? A child has no *character*, because it has nothing so fixed as to merit the name. How many *tempers*? how many *states of mind* did you feel, ere you arrived to it? and yet a moment's reflection will convince you, that were your *dispositions* different, your present *character* would be disgraced, or ennobled by a very different name: but were your *dispositions* the effect of the *instant*? No—and the most *depraved*, or the most *exalted characters* that ever the history of nations depicted, evidently *originated in a single thought*—that thought by *repetition*, gained a facility—or a disposition to recur; and thus it led on to that *solid—fixed—durable* creature, termed *character*.

The



The knowledge, which I recommend, by shewing *nature's course* from the infant to the man, would teach you how to quicken, or to hinder; how to reverse, or to modify; in a word, as parents—as tutors—as patriots—as citizens of the world—you would be able to effect the only object desirable in life; if not with *absolute certainty*, yet with the *highest degree of probability*. Do indulge me with a figure—you would, with a pleasure only equalled by your care, watch the mental progress of your children from the most imperfect notices, to every stage of their various acquisitions. You would see that, like tender vines, they were exposed to the influences of a varying atmosphere, and changing seasons. You would perceive them collecting vigour from the combined effects of situation and attention—not surprising you by the *silent growth* of a day, but *unanswerably* proving it, at more distant intervals; the operations of nature would at no



period be *lost*, or *destroyed*—The tendrils would take their proper situation. You would with transport behold every shoot acquiring a firmer texture—and in due season you would taste that fruit, which, but for your *wisdom*, would never have come to perfection. I was about to illustrate the question of *utility*, from the discoveries of a Harvey and a Havers—Willis and Malpighius—Asellius and Becket, &c. &c. with respect to the *body* of man ; had not I recollected that I was only writing an address.

Q. 3. Admitting the necessity, and the utility of *such* knowledge, what is the most *ready and effectual* method of gaining it ? I answer, 1. making *experiments*, or cautiously attending to the *effects* produced by every object upon the minds of children. 2. From the *result* of experiments, repeated, and diversified, and carefully recorded, deduce the *laws* of mind. 3. Apply these laws so discovered,



ed, to explain particular phenomena, and convert them into *basis principles of action* in education.

1. Is it possible to make the mind of man the subject of experiment? Yes. You know that every substance in nature is a *collection of properties and powers*.—Your ideas of life—shape—colour—flight, &c. which you have affixed to the word bird—your opinion of water that it is a fluid—salt—or tasteless—volatile—without scent—or with it—smooth—round hard, &c. &c. is nothing more than this—for *deprive* either birds or water of their different *properties and powers*, and what remains of either? Now these are the objects of our senses or reflection: by means of these, we become acquainted with their resemblances, and differences. If you apply one substance to another, you perceive certain *effects* from this *relation*, as the melting of wax, or the evaporation of a fluid by the action  
of



of fire; and the *forming* of this relation, to judge of the extent of their properties and powers, you term *experiment*—experiment then, is no more than doing something, in order to find out what is at present *unknown*—the consequence of any experiment, you term an effect produced by it, and, *noticing* the effect, leads you to an acquaintance with the *cause* of that effect. Now what forbids that the mind, or soul of your child (as it is generally called), should be made the subject of *regular and certain experiment*, equally with every other substance in the whole system of nature? Is it not a *collection of properties and powers*? What else are sensation—memory—reason—reflection—emotion—passions, &c.? And what is *proposing* any truth, or fact; recommending any precept or maxim to a child, but *trying* the effect of each? You will not assert that the powers, or inclinations of a child can be known *previous* to some trial—that  
*nothing*



*nothing* results from that trial—that effects have *no* cause—that the nature of those causes are beyond the reach of our *knowledge*—the whole of this would (I appeal to you as men of reason) be evidently *irrational*. Take the following illustration.

If I reprove a boy for a lie, I *form a relation* between his mind and the reproof—I do not know the *certain* effect of this before-hand. The *experiment* proves him obstinate; but the effect *might* have been totally different. I renew this reproof a given number of times for a similar offence—obstinacy is the result of each—I begin to speculate upon the *cause* of this phenomenon—I alter the *circumstances* of the reproof—a different effect takes place. I *try* the influence of admonition upon a child of known *different* dispositions; the effect is, present ingenuity and future caution. Carry your ideas into every other part of education,



cation, and you will acknowledge, that the *whole* of it is *experiment*; equally so with endeavouring to ascertain the effect of *Æqua-Regia* upon a piece of gold, or the electric fluid upon a capillary syphon.

You may, in *general*, believe the mind to be a substance *totally different* from what is termed *matter*. You may imagine that the species of powers, I have mentioned, can *never* result from any *particular organization* of matter.\* I will  
not

---

\* The writer does not mean to assert that it is perfectly *indifferent* whether man be considered as one *homogeneous* substance, or not. Whether the *brain* be viewed as the *cause* of our various species of thought, or a substance *immaterial*, &c. placed in the head: He believes that truth of *every* kind, must have the advantage of falsehood. That the mind is a *system* of powers resulting from the organization of the brain—in other words, that the soul is matter of a *peculiar modification*, and that reflection—sensation—reason, &c. are *properties* of this matter. And he doubts not but,  
in



not in these sheets contend with you *against* so common, but so *unphilosophical*, a sentiment; because you *must* allow the *existence* of such powers, refer them to what *sort of substance* you please; and this will be sufficient to make the mind of man the *proper subject of philosophical experiment*. Indeed if it be not, I challenge any person to write or speak intelligibly about it. I wish parents and preceptors would habituate themselves to notice the different effects of their instruction, example, and discipline; and carefully re-

---

in proportion as mankind increase their attention to *causes and effects*, this sentiment will be found consistent with, and even *nicely to harmonize* with every other phænomenon of his constitution, and with his highest interest; whether it respects the present, or the future—He flatters himself the reader will excuse the length of this note, when he informs him that it is designed to soften his mind for a future publication, in defence of *the entire materiality of man, as the strongest proof of the peerless value of the doctrine of J. C.* Jno. 11. 25.

F

cord



cord them without *alteration* or *addition* in some book for the purpose: How often are minutes of far inferior moment recorded with peculiar eagerness?

2. From the result of experiments, *repeated*, and *diversified*, and *carefully recorded*, would it be possible to deduce the *laws* of the mind? Undoubtedly it would. But here is something to explain, and something to confirm. When I assert that the mind of your child is subject to *laws*, I mean, that the afore-mentioned powers, always operate in some *particular manner*—that there are certain facts with respect to the understanding; the memory; the will; the passions; which take place *regularly*, and *invariably*, and that the ground of your conclusion “that any portion of matter has its laws” is the *constancy of an effect in certain given circumstances*. But I must be plainer. Whence then springs that train of enervating—debasing superstitions in the vulgar, concerning



cerning the various appearances of nature? I allude, particularly, to the causes of thunder and lightning; of wind and excessive rain; earthquakes, and the northern lights? Evidently from this—their ignorance of the laws of nature—these understood, would convince them, that lightning, storm, &c. will *invariably* take place in *given circumstances*. In order to convince you of the possibility of deducing the laws of mind, from a collection of *similar* facts, I refer you to the manner in which Sir Isaac Newton formed his laws of matter and motion. Before he could assert that all bodies continue their state of rest or motion, in a right line, till they are made to change that state, by some external force impressed upon them; he was obliged to pay a close attention to the appearances of things: observing the *same* effect to take place, in every portion of matter he was acquainted with; he very rationally concluded that these *numerous*



*similar effects*, followed from some *cause*, that was a *law* to it ; and that determined it to act so and not otherwise. Put the case, that you see a ball of iron shot from the mouth of a cannon five hundred times ; and that each time it moves in a totally different direction ; I ask whether it would be *possible* for you to assign any *law* to it, or to predict, with any even the *least probability*, the line of direction, in the five hundred and first ? and why not ?——Sir Isaac Newton has founded his philosophy upon the great and extensive principle of gravity ; but he first collected all the phænomena, to which his comprehensive soul was equal—he arranged his facts—and then rose, like a philosopher, to a general principle. What then forbids that we should be capable of forming the *laws of mind*, as well as the laws of *nature in general* ? If, as I have proved, the mind can be made the subject of *experiment*—if those experiments can be recorded in all their attending



tending *circumstances* — some *conclusion* must result from a judicious arrangement of these; and such conclusions will be *laws*, or what *usually* takes place. The following case, I think you will allow at once pointed and plain. Your power of *remembering* any particular fact, within the sphere of your observation, *increases* in proportion to the *times* that fact occurs, or the *degrees* of pleasure and pain, that accompany the impression of it. It is not *one* fact that warrants the truth of this general observation; it is not an assemblage of *dis*similar ones; for it was never known, that any event of your lives, *unattended* with what we term a pleasurable or painful state of mind, *so readily* returned to your memory, as the contrary. Again; you must be convinced that the *vigour* of your *actions* bear a proportion to the strength of your *motives* to those actions.

3. Apply



3. Apply these laws *so* discovered, to explain particular phænomena, and convert them into *basis-principles* of *action* in education.

The process I have recommended, was no other than that by which Sir Isaac Newton forms his system of philosophy. And it is well known, to persons acquainted with his views, to what an astonishing number of separate phænomena, he applied the one law of gravity. The *law of memory*, now mentioned, *accounts*, to a very considerable degree, for the slow progress of children at a variety of schools: how is it possible it should be otherwise, when instruction is not so stationed by the good sense of the tutor, as to recur either *often* or *forcibly*? The law of *action*, now specified, makes it a reflection upon any man who wonders at the versatility, or the indolence of young gentlemen in many large schools. It would be far more astonishing,



ing, should it be otherwise ; Such facts would tend to *reverse* the opinion of the laws of action. If tutors will engage to present motives of a proper kind — number — and degree, I will ensure them the virtue of their pupils as the *effect*. I need not inform such men, that all *laws* are given to *guide* to a *certain effect* ; and that their wisdom, as men, consists in *according* with whatever they perceive to be the cause of nature — whatever that be, it must conduce to the universal good : but if they will dare to neglect or oppose it, the wisdom of God will stamp *folly*, *disappointment*, and *pain* upon their conduct. Will you, Gentlemen, avail yourselves of the following observations ?

Intellectual pleasures succeed to sensible ones — our opinions are considerably influenced by our tempers — our actions are governed by the succession of our ideas — the body affects the mind  
— general



—general ideas succeed to particular—  
evidence must precede faith—children  
discover a strong propensity to imitation  
—hope and fear are the two great springs  
of human actions— but I desist—It shall  
only be a shilling pamphlet.

If then the preceding definitions,  
maxims, and reasonings be just, can you  
any longer hesitate about the *manner* in  
which you shall advance and secure the  
knowledge—the virtue of your species?  
In these pages, you have, what I venture  
to describe, as a method of forming a  
theory of education that is *just—practi-  
cable and useful*—a method consonant to  
the usual rules of philosophizing, and  
supported by the practice, and the suc-  
cess of the most enlightened men, the  
present or past ages ever knew. What  
is become of the system of the French  
philosopher? What of the writings of  
Aristotle? What of the jargon of Dun  
Scotus? It was Newton that banished  
Descartes



Descartes by the majesty of reason and of truth: and the system of Descartes, will, from henceforth, wear the appearance of fable. I will not assert that the philosophy of the mind has *never* been attended to; but this I may be forgiven; that if this had been favoured with attention, equal to what has been given to the different parts of *unanimated* matter, the knowledge of it, would have advanced with equal *certainty and success*. Indeed the immortal Hartley, (who is the Newton in the intellectual world,) has smoothed the path for any *daring* spirit who chuses to walk after him. If such a man be disposed to resume his extensive principle—to unfold it with a nicer minuteness—to apply it to the theory of education—and do what Hartley has not done, enrich society with a *method* of forming children through their different stages to knowledge, to virtue, to happiness—a method justified by a *collection of similar facts*—of well cir-

G

cumstanced



*cumstanced experiments*—and of real laws, he will discover that “secret” to the world, which will *contribute more than any thing to the amendment of mankind*. This, in my solemn opinion, is the *true — the only arcanum* of education. I conjecture that even the thoughtful Doctor Price cannot suppose that we have any latent mental *powers* that remain to be discovered; and what remains of any substance, when you have deprived it of these and its properties? Surely then, it must consist in the effectual manner of directing those powers. God knows my heart is powerfully interested by the magnitude of my object; not so, but I can look steadily at it: I will express my wishes.—If any kindred spirit be disposed to execute this work, which will give such grandeur to his character in all future ages, he must begin by observing *facts*; he must keep in view, those *rules* of *philosophizing* laid down by Sir Isaac Newton; he must, from real appearances, form



form his *laws*; he must prescribe rules of a *practical* nature, which derive all their energy from those laws; he must carefully mark those periods at which the several mental powers successively unfold themselves; and, in every direction, he must harmonize with nature, in order of *time* and order of *manner*; he will then merit the title of *Inventor*, because in the language of Ferguson “\* to make a new discovery, is either to investigate some law, or to point out some *new application*.”

’Tis possible, that *you* who have now honoured this Address with a perusal, may be a *preceptor* of youth. I do not ask of you, the assent of an enervated slave.—Here make a pause, and *re-consider* the address to the *reader*. I have advanced in the preceding pages, either truth or falsehood — do, indulge the writer in his partiality to their truth—

---

\* Moral Philosophy, part II. cap. 2. page 88.



his heart is above the defence of a known falsehood; and his attachment is not the effect of unheeded progression, but of repeated examination. If you reject his title to this address, by asserting that a knowledge of mental philosophy is *not* necessary to an *efficacious* plan of education; what *sort* of knowledge will you substitute? It is beyond your power to select from the whole circle of arts and sciences, one subject so intimately connected with education as this. This single circumstance is sufficient therefore, to give it the preference. As I cannot pay so contemptible a compliment to your understanding, as to suppose you capable of asserting that *no knowledge* is previously necessary, I shall gratify my humanity by believing that you, with me, allow the *necessity* of *this* species of philosophical knowledge — have *you* then made those acquisitions, the necessity of which you acknowledge yourself convinced of? I appeal to delicacy — I do  
not



not wish to see you blush—but I desire you to notice the ingenuous dictates of your own heart, of whatever complexion they may be. I cannot believe, (and you will bear with my pen) that the *body* of school-masters really know any more of the mind than they do of the supposed planetary inhabitants—upon no other principle, but their *ignorance*, can we account for modes of education, at once common, false, enervating, and pernicious. In your public advertisements, you assure the parents of your pupils that you will train them to virtuous feelings and decent manners: But how can *you* pretend to *regulate* the formation of habits, when you cannot speak *intelligibly* about them? If *characters* arise, in the course of nature, from *tempers*—tempers from *habits*—habits from *acts*; and these again, from other *inclinations*, which are habits; how is it *possible* that you should manage the heart of a youth with any *tolerable success*, when you really do *not* know *how* man, as such, grows



grows into any fixed principles? The *sort* of discipline which you introduce for your different pupils, the *efficacy* of your reproofs must depend upon that nice, discriminating attention, which arises from mental philosophy.

It is a real injury to society, that so many persons fly to the office of education, as their last refuge, after bankruptcies and extreme difficulties. I confess that even this would be no reflection, were their minds in the least prepared for it; but too often a drone in society determines, at his wits end, to nod upon the folly of an inattentive parent.

- “ A butcher broke, may breed a butcher’s brat :
- “ Himself is still a brother of the bat ;
- “ *Whom nought befits, and who can nothing fit,*
- “ May open still a nursery of wit.”

Seriously — when any man’s wishes to educate have ripened into a *resolution* to do it, he should devote a considerable  
space



space of *time* to that object he desires to pursue. He should *ascertain* the particular art, sciences, or languages, he intends to teach.—He should collect the most approved treatises upon man, his powers, attainments, &c. He should *form* for himself a particular *plan* of conveying his instructions—He should avail himself perpetually of *observation* on the discriminating *circumstances* of human characters—he should, if possible, centre the vigour of his attention on *himself*—his defects—his virtues, &c. &c. and having entered with the soul of a man, into the subject in *general*, and his own object in *particular*, he should begin to teach—he should attend with the nicest care, to the *influence* of the method *pre-resolved* upon—he should minute down each day, the precise *effects* of every part of his discipline—he should ——— But I will not delineate what a tutor of young men *ought* to be; neither will I distress my feelings, by considering *what* tutors *now* are;



*are*; but conclude with observing, that should *any preceptor* protest, in the gloom of his reflections, that there is a nameless — something in the preceding address to *him* that he cannot relish; he must relax the severity of his brow by this single thought:

“ There is some soul of *goodness* in things evil,  
 “ Would men *observingly distil* it out” —

I do most affectionately entreat you, who are *parents*, at least to begin to pay a *practical* attention to the *established course* of nature. When I consider the past state of this town, my heart forbids me to expect from you *much* acquaintance with the subject of my address. Especially when I reflect how exceeding few, even of the *learned*, have any *solid* or *determinate* ideas upon the nature and laws of mind. Nevertheless, of this course, as it respects the seasons of the year; the succession of light and darkness; the growth of vegetables; or the security of health; you cannot



cannot really be *ignorant*, whatever may be the degree of your *inattention*. But have you the authority of *appearances*, or of *reason*, to *confine* the established course to these? I have asserted that there are *fixed laws* for the *mind*, equally with the revolution of the heavenly bodies, or the descent of a stone, when thrown from your hand. You may perceive this from what is ever taking place in this large town, with respect to *characters*. Those among you, who are at once the *oldest* and the *wisest*, have seen the man as to *disposition*, *begun*, and *carried on*, if not *completed*, in several of your acquaintance. Will you assert, that those who are so variously *characterized*, either by the love of power—the operations of benevolence, &c. owe *nothing* to some, at *first* *slight* impressions, or what are frequently termed, *accidental circumstances*; and to what are you to attribute the glory or disgrace of nations—the character that you are disposed to deem almost com-

H pletely



pletely virtuous, or completely vicious, but those circumstances which ignorance *derides* and inattention *smiles at*?

If your children could *prevent* impressions which are made, by coarse language, indecent manners, and turbulent passions; the attention which I am enforcing, would be less necessary. This is impossible. Look well then to you servants—yourself—their tutors; at least satisfy yourselves that the *master* of your children is an *excellent character*; if not, your offspring, accustomed to his—his—his—, will, in a *silent imperceptible manner*, bring from him those turns of feeling—of thinking—of speaking—of acting—that your after-care cannot destroy.

Habituate yourselves to some consistent views of *society*. You and your children are placed within a circle of influences. As *individuals*, you affect this town: as a *town*, those which are more  
imme-



immediately connected with you—thus, in gradation, the different states of Europe ; if not every part of the habitable system with which you are acquainted. These, I feel, are great views ; but they are just ones : and from the laws of the individual—the laws of society—and the mighty object which education proposes, I argue the indispensable necessity of your making a revolution in the common unsuccessful modes of education among you ; and thus alone I justify the frankness of this address.

*I am, and hope to be, in all situations, a  
Friend to the highest enjoyment of  
every part of animated nature.*



ERRAT. page 39, last line but one,  
For ingeniousness, read ingenuousness.



entirely new.

1967

1941

\_\_\_\_\_



